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## The role of beer canteens and licensed clubs

The establishment of beer canteens and social clubs in remote Indigenous communities was a direct consequence of the aspiration to teach ‘civilised’—or, in more modern parlance, moderate—drinking. Providing rationed amounts of alcohol was seen by many in government as a way to ease inexperienced Indigenous drinkers into familiarity with alcohol, while also helping more experienced drinkers to abandon the undesirable patterns of consumption acquired both before and after the repeal of prohibitions affecting them.<sup>1</sup>

Equality and the embrace of citizenship demanded that Aboriginal people should fit in and take their place in society, including at the hotel bar alongside average Australians. The leading idea was that Aboriginal people should be introduced to alcohol and *taught to drink* in a ‘civilised’ manner: a step along the road to integration, so that ‘they’ would learn to drink (and be) like ‘us’. It was an idea in keeping with the thinking of civil rights activists and progressives of the time, and was also in line with the expressed desire of numerous Aboriginal leaders that their people should (somehow) learn to control wild drinking.

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1 This chapter expands on material published by the author as a discussion paper in 2014.

Of course, some Aboriginal people already had drinking rights: these were mostly individuals of mixed descent who, by reaching certain behavioural 'standards' (such as 'adopting the habits of civilised life'<sup>2</sup>), had been exempted from the provisions of the various state and territory laws that prohibited alcohol possession and consumption—a status certified by an exemption certificate, otherwise known as a 'dog tag'. As Charles Rowley pointed out, such exemptions were reminiscent of French colonial practices that employed the concept of the *évolué*; in Australia, exemptions were granted to assimilated people who, although of 'native' origin, had proved themselves to be civilised and therefore eligible for full civil rights (Rowley 1970: 357).<sup>3</sup> Perhaps the clubs would help the previously non-exempt Aboriginal people to become *évolués* too? The idea that Aboriginal people should learn to drink like Australians who drank moderately was, arguably, an 'assimilationist' one, involving the internalisation of Western middle-class notions of individual responsibility and inner discipline. However, the idea that Aboriginal people should be able to exercise local control, shape rules and design a physical and social environment in which this moderation was likely to happen represents 'self-determination'.<sup>4</sup> In this respect, 'civilising' drinking was an assimilationist project that, with the advent of the idea of local control over clubs, spilled over into the era of self-determination and blurred the boundaries between the two.

Overall, it appears that broad sections of both the Indigenous and non-Indigenous polity believed that the provision of on-site alcohol facilities under the control of local people who implemented strict limits or rations was the best way to 'teach' proper drinking. Yet, the provision of canteens was by no means an Australia-wide phenomenon. Such drinking facilities only appeared in any organised way in the Northern Territory, South Australia and Queensland. Similar ideas were circulating at around the same time in Papua New Guinea, which, until 1975, was under Australian administration. Like Indigenous Australians, the people of Papua New Guinea had learned about drunkenness by observing hard-drinking colonial officers and traders, most of whom were Australian. It became legal for Papua New Guineans to purchase and consume alcohol in

2 This wording is from the *Natives (Citizenship Rights) Act 1944* (WA) (Chesterman 2005:125).

3 The term *évolué*, literally meaning a 'developed' or 'evolved' person, derives from the French colonial era. It was employed to describe natives who had assimilated and accepted European values and patterns of behaviour.

4 Thanks to Tim Rowse for making this point.

1962.<sup>5</sup> Prompted by rural men's disruptive behaviour in town hotels and a rise in motor vehicle accidents, provincial governments in the newly independent country decided to promote village clubs as an experiment in managing alcohol consumption in rural areas. It was hoped traditional social controls would swing into action and community leaders would intervene if there was violence. The clubs were envisaged as places where people could learn to drink in an environment that was comfortable for family members of both sexes, and in a manner that was based on an idealised version of the drinking habits of expatriates (Sexton 1982: 112). However, as was the case in Australian Indigenous communities in ensuing years, these hopes were found to be overly optimistic.

## A sudden transition to drinking rights

Both Aboriginal people and white sympathisers campaigned for formal equal rights, including the right to drink liquor. In 1962, Joe McGinness, president of the Federal Council for Aboriginal Advancement, argued that such rights were 'important inasmuch as they at least recognise that Aborigines and Islanders are human beings' (Chesterman 2005: 25). In New South Wales, the Aboriginal-Australian Fellowship lobbied hard for prohibition to be repealed, arguing that the section of the Aborigines Protection Act (NSW) that prohibited the sale and supply of alcohol subjected Aboriginal people to 'unwarranted humiliation and segregation'. Research by prominent Melbourne barrister Elizabeth Eggleston (1976), exposed the inherently discriminatory nature of Australia's liquor laws, the enthusiasm with which police used such laws as a means of harassing Aboriginal people, and the abject failure of restrictions to prevent Aboriginal people from getting hold of alcohol. Yet, for many white sympathisers, the repeal of restrictions on Aboriginal drinking presented an ethical and moral dilemma. The people for whom this was most difficult were progressively minded Christians and temperance advocates. Such advocates supported equal rights in all areas of life for Aboriginal citizens and, aware that these would inevitably include the right to drink, feared the consequences. Dr Charles Duguid, founder of Ernabella Presbyterian mission, and his wife Phyllis Duguid, a prominent member

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5 The Australian administration thus made the sale and consumption of alcohol legal in Papua New Guinea before the states and territories in Australia made it legal for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders to drink.

of the WCTU, were conflicted about the right to drink for Aboriginal people. In 1960, Phyllis Duguid, who did not drink herself, reported to the WCTU National Convention:

The whole question of the Aborigine and his right to consume liquor is a difficult one. In our desire to protect these people against havoc caused by alcohol, we sometimes run the risk of making them regard alcohol as a special privilege to be attained. Unhappily many do think of the right to consume alcohol as an inseparable part of citizenship. Alcohol education would make an important contribution towards the solution of the problem.<sup>6</sup>

Mrs Duguid's wish for 'alcohol education' was echoed by others. In 1961, a Northern Territory Missions-Administration Conference agreed that before there were any changes to the law, a public education campaign should be conducted, disseminating information on the dangers of alcohol and the advantages of temperance. The conference thought that Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) might be able to help in this endeavour (Symons et al. 1963). However, apart from sporadic efforts by charitable bodies such as the WCTU and other Christian organisations, it seems that no formal or official public education campaigns were mounted by government prior to the repeal of prohibition for Aboriginal people.<sup>7</sup>

When it eventually happened, state by state, the transition from prohibition to drinking rights occurred precipitously, taking many people by surprise. The repeal in South Australia in 1965, for example, was described as being total prohibition one day, complete freedom the next. The premier was accused of acting impetuously, having consulted with neither Aboriginal people nor the state Department of Aboriginal Affairs (Hansen 1972). The rapid liberalisation, it was stated, had had a 'profoundly demoralising effect' on Aboriginal people who, had they been asked, would have requested a gradual transition period 'with the *first step* being the provision of drinking facilities on the various reserves' (Hansen 1972: 6, emphasis added). On Queensland Aboriginal reserves, restrictions on supply and consumption continued until 1971 when, suddenly and disastrously, a government official was empowered to establish a beer canteen in each community (Fitzgerald 2001).

6 WCTU Minute Book SRG 186/1/8 1935–40, State Library of South Australia.

7 Gary Stoll (Finke River Mission, Hermannsburg) said, 'nobody knew what was going to hit them, that it would be such a big problem and that the graves would open up' (Finnane 1997: 5).

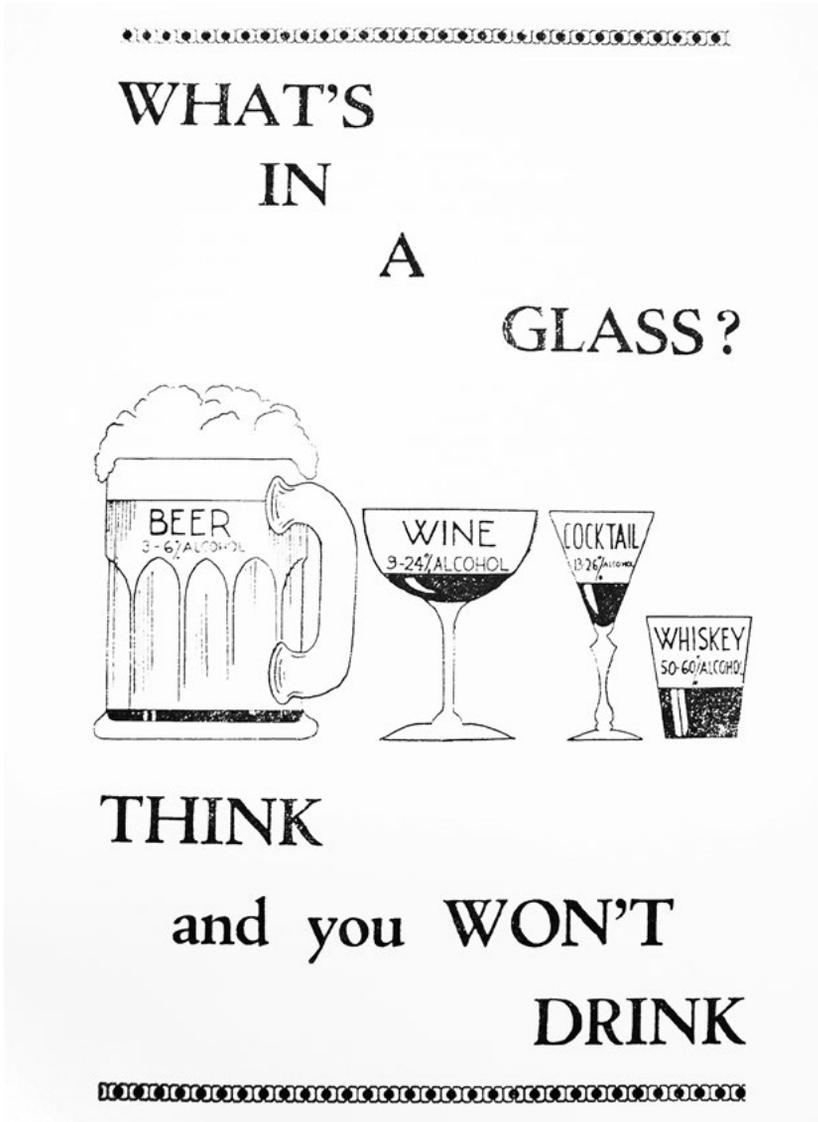


Fig. 7 'What's in a glass?' WCTU pamphlet c. 1950

Source: Woman's Christian Temperance Union

### Promoting the idea of canteens and clubs

While rural and urban Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people could act on their newly acquired right to drink by going into hotels and drinking alongside whites, in more remote areas, access to legitimate

outlets was difficult. Aboriginal residents of bush communities did not commonly frequent public hotels, and they were less familiar with alcohol than their rural and urban counterparts. Beyond the discrete and relatively protected boundaries of missions and settlements, the availability of liquor had increased with the advent of off-licence and drive-in bottle shops. These made takeaway alcohol easier to access<sup>8</sup> and posed a threat to inexperienced drinkers. In some regions, public opinion (in the form of non-Aboriginal townsfolk) had already broached the idea of Aboriginal people having their own beer canteens in their communities. These would not only keep Aboriginal people out of town, they would also allow for the development of 'civilised' drinking. This was suggested as early as 1954 in the Northern Territory when the citizens of Alice Springs and readers of the local newspaper were asked, in an informal opinion poll, what could be done about drunken 'natives':

While on the one hand, we found a lot of people who believe ever increasing vigilance should be taken to see that natives do not get drunk at all, we found others who favour the establishment of canteens at settlements so that aborigines can become used to civilised drinking. The exponents of the latter theory claim that a beer with a reduced alcoholic content could be sold to natives in these canteens and claim that the present troubles arise because men with no alcohol in their blood at all suddenly get hold of a bottle of wine.<sup>9</sup> (*Centralian Advocate* 26 March 1954: 9)

Ted Evans, head of the Native Affairs Branch (later the Welfare Branch) in Alice Springs, believed that the best way to solve the 'rotgut' wine problem in the town, was to dispense low-alcohol beer from wet canteens on all settlements, and to teach Aboriginal people how to cope with alcohol correctly. Notwithstanding the outcome of the *Centralian Advocate's* opinion poll, he was widely criticised for this suggestion.<sup>10</sup> In 1961, the Missions-Administration Conference discussed the advantages and disadvantages of removing the restrictions on alcohol: with considerable foresight, a subcommittee proposed the introduction of a local option system for communities because 'well-controlled wet canteens may be needed on certain settlements' (Symons et al. 1963).<sup>11</sup>

8 The first drive-in bottle shop in Australia opened at Largs Bay, Adelaide, in 1953.

9 Twenty years later, in 1975, the anthropologist Jeff Collmann (1988: 50) reported that, following an alleged rape in Alice Springs, there had been renewed calls for wet canteens away from the town.

10 As reported by Reg Harris in *Alice Springs News* 2 July 1997: 3.

11 GJ Symonds (Uniting Church), P Albrecht (Lutheran Church) and JPM Long (Welfare Branch) were members of the subcommittee.

There was soon support for the idea at higher levels of government. Following the 1967 Referendum, the Council for Aboriginal Affairs (CAA) was established as an advisory body operating out of the newly established Office of Aboriginal Affairs located within the Prime Minister's Department. The three member body—Dr HC 'Nugget' Coombs, Professor WEH Stanner and Barrie Dexter—encouraged the government to abandon many of the programs and assumptions of assimilation and to emphasise the right of Aboriginal people to decide their own futures (Long 1992: 160). The Whitlam (1972–75) and Fraser (1975–83) governments introduced legislation that enabled Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders to make choices; thereafter, encouraging Indigenous Australians to take responsibility became the pre-eminent theme of government, non-government and mission authorities. The new emphasis on community decision-making extended to decisions about alcohol, and both governments and mission authorities believed that communities should discuss the 'dry' or 'wet' status of their settlements (DAA 1974, 1976: 22, Fletcher 1992).

The CAA strongly supported the idea of local wet canteens. Indeed, according to Dexter, the very idea that communities might have alcohol supplied to them in moderation at local canteens originated from the CAA.<sup>12</sup> The CAA was aware that bootleggers were grog running into some communities and that Aboriginal people were setting up vigilante groups to try to prevent this. It was of the view that, rather than protecting Aboriginal people, 'they had to learn to handle alcohol themselves'.<sup>13</sup> Although its work was undervalued (and sometimes undermined) by John Gorton, the prime minister who succeeded Harold Holt, the CAA was highly influential in Aboriginal policy until it was disbanded in 1976.<sup>14</sup>

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12 The CAA believed that liquor should be available under controlled conditions on reserves and Dexter advised the minister of this in 1970. This advice was in the context of failed Aboriginal objections to the licensing of the Walkabout Hotel, which was within the reserve at Nhulunbuy and only a short distance from Yirrkala mission (Dexter 2015: 150). However, as noted, the idea of canteens had already been floated informally in Alice Springs.

13 Dexter, pers comm, 25 November 2005.

14 Gorton supported entrepreneurship for Aboriginal people, but not special rights (Dexter, pers comm, 25 November 2005).

On the ground in the Northern Territory, where the federal government had particular influence, policy was mobilised by patrol officers and officers of the Welfare Branch.<sup>15</sup> Many of these government representatives were critical of prohibition and supportive of the idea of wet canteens: some even 'pushed' the idea, according to church workers from several different regions.<sup>16</sup> John Harris (1998: 294) of the Church Missionary Society (CMS) remarked that 'under the Welfare Branch' alcohol became freely available in some communities. Reverend Bill Edwards of Ernabella Mission reported that government officers who visited the community were 'free drinkers' themselves, implying that there was a degree of self-interest in their support for wet canteens. The anticipated merits of wet canteens were certainly the subject of many discussions within government offices as settlement superintendents grappled with the problems posed by Aboriginal people from remote communities seeking opportunities to drink at rural hotels, and ending up having road accidents or facing criminal charges.

In South Australia, there was strong pressure from the state office of the DAA for one or more wet canteens to be established on what was then the dry North West Reserve, now the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands. A departmental file note from 1969 explained the dilemma:

I am certain the time is rapidly approaching when the 'liquor era' will begin in the N.W.R. [North West Reserve] area. And also I am certain the majority of the people will drink liquor. The alternative before us is to act in time by providing at least some education or to try and shut the door after the horse has bolted. For example, the West Coast area<sup>17</sup> ... The provision of a wet canteen is not saying that the people *shall* drink. It is providing the means by which those who desire to drink or at least experiment, may do so under reasonable circumstances.<sup>18</sup>

15 The patrol officer service ended in 1974, and the Welfare Branch became the Welfare Division of the Northern Territory Administration. Later, many former patrol officers joined the federal DAA as public servants (Long 1992).

16 Reverend Jim Downing of the Uniting Church asserted that patrol officers, members of the Welfare Branch and later DAA officers, and mission superintendents, all pushed for canteens. Father John Leary of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart Mission (MSC) at Melville Island, Daly River Mission and Wadeye, identified specific government officers as having promoted alcohol availability in the communities (interviews with author).

17 The author was referring to the recently licensed beer canteen at Yalata community on the far west coast of South Australia.

18 D Busbridge, Assistant Director DAA, 6/1/69. GRS 6624/1/P, DAA520/68. South Australian State Records (original emphasis).

The superintendent of the North West Reserve was also in favour of the controlled availability of liquor there: he argued that a proposed recreational centre at Amata should include a bar where Aboriginal people, who he referred to, rather significantly, as *évolués*, might drink.<sup>19</sup>

In the context of an increase in Aboriginal drunkenness in towns such as Alice Spring, formal government inquiries (rather than simply local field officers or departmental staffers) began to recommend that alcohol should be made available in Aboriginal settlements. The Northern Territory Legislative Council conducted a Board of Inquiry into the sale and consumption of liquor in 1973. This was prompted by the Territory's weak liquor ordinance, which was allowing licensees to get away with poor-serving practices, resulting in 'scenes of drunkenness and degradation in and around the hotels, streets and creek beds ... far worse than anything expected' (*Centralian Advocate* 1973: 1).<sup>20</sup> The inquiry, which declared that Territorians (in general) were Australia's biggest drunks and roundly condemned poor drinking facilities and the irresponsible behaviour of licensees, primarily addressed Aboriginal drinking. It recommended the establishment of social clubs for Aboriginal people, and advised that these should not be confined to settlements or missions: 'fringe dwellers' around towns such as Darwin and Alice Springs needed to be assisted to establish clubs. Summing-up contemporary explanations, the inquiry identified four underlying causes of Aboriginal drinking problems:

- a. Their different stage of cultural development [and] influence of their traditional life in which alcohol played no part.
- b. The lack in their culture of in-built sanctions for the control of alcohol usage [and] their being caught up in rapid social change and subsequent social disorganization.
- c. Their lack of awareness of the harmful effects of drinking to excess [and] their lack of education in domestic budgeting and proper use of money.
- d. Their excessive expenditure of [sic] intoxicating liquor and the poor conditions under which they consume intoxicating liquor. (*Centralian Advocate* 16 August 1973: 2)

19 The superintendent of the North West Reserve, David Hope, used the term *évolué* (Hope to director DAA 25/10/68. GRS 6624/1/P, DAA520/68. South Australian State Records). Jeremy Beckett (1958) used the same term when referring to mixed descent Aboriginal people in western New South Wales (234).

20 The inquiry was called for by Bernie Kilgariff, member for Alice Springs in the Northern Territory Legislative Council. It was chaired by PR Adams QC.

The idea of Aboriginal people's *choice* over the liquor status of communities was coming into play. This was articulated by Eggleston (1976: 261) who argued that granting licences to Aboriginal missions or institutions on reserves:

Might be preferable to making liquor on reserves completely uncontrolled, particularly if it rests on a system of local option. A referendum should be held on each Aboriginal institution to see whether the resident Aborigines want the continuation of a 'dry' reserve, or the establishment of a 'wet canteen' or the abandonment of all controls on the entry of liquor.

Aboriginal people's choice on the issue of alcohol control was endorsed by the Commonwealth House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs (HRSCAA) inquiry into alcohol problems in 1977.<sup>21</sup> Many, though not all submissions, took a *laissez-faire* and generally 'wet' perspective on access to alcohol: one Aboriginal man from One Arm Point in Western Australia argued that every Aboriginal settlement should have a licence (Brady 2004: 59, Commonwealth of Australia 1977). The HRSCAA reiterated the idea that clubs would facilitate 'sensible' drinking:

Should an Aboriginal community decide to allow alcohol to be brought into the community the Committee believes that a licensed club or beer canteen should hold the only liquor licence within that community ... A properly established and supervised club or beer canteen complying with the law relating to drinking and drunkenness and concerned with the well-being of its members presents the most practical method of encouraging sensible drinking patterns. (Commonwealth of Australia 1977: 48–9)

There would, of course, have to be guidelines, arrangements for legal responsibility and supervision, limited opening hours, rigid enforcement, the sale of nutritious food, sales of beer only and penalties for breaches. It was not clear who would 'properly establish' and supervise the clubs, what entity would hold the licence nor how best to ensure that the clubs would be 'concerned' about the wellbeing of members. While the HRSCAA believed that there was no reason why the clubs or beer canteens should not be run as commercial ventures, it had no advice about who should benefit from any profits so derived or who should decide on their distribution. It was assumed that if Aboriginal community organisations were allowed to control the outlets themselves, people would (somehow) come to terms with alcohol and moderate drinking would develop more or less automatically.

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21 For more detail about this inquiry, see Brady (2004: 58–67).

A few years after the HRSCAA reported on alcohol problems, the Northern Territory initiated a new *Liquor Act 1981* that established a Liquor Commission as a statutory body that had flexible powers to hear public objections to the granting of licences, and that could involve local governments, including Aboriginal community councils, in liquor decisions. Since their formation, Aboriginal reserves in the Northern Territory had all been 'dry', but the Liquor Act made dry areas an option for Aboriginal communities: they now had to make a deliberate choice in the matter. The Liquor Commission toured the communities to hear their views. Communities that so desired could legitimately open community-controlled clubs with liquor served for consumption on the premises. The Northern Territory's Drug and Alcohol Bureau noted that:

The Aboriginal councils concerned hope [in this way] to be able to avoid the potentially damaging effects of liquor in their areas while at the same time providing an opportunity for those people who wish to drink to do so in more-or-less convivial, well controlled circumstances. (Larkins & McDonald 1984: 61)

## The influence of the missions

Across the world, Protestant and Catholic churches have long taken different approaches to alcohol consumption; these different approaches were reflected in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities that began as missions. The temperance movement developed from Protestantism, but there were wide variations in thinking between denominations. English Protestants were initially not as strict as Dutch ones, and Anglican ecclesiastical vineyards were once widespread. In America, it was Methodists and Quakers who spearheaded the Anti-Saloon Leagues, while in Sweden, Magnus Huss, the son of a Lutheran pastor, coined the expression *alcoholism* (Sournia 1990). By contrast, the Catholic Church tended to be more tolerant about alcohol. At the end of the nineteenth century, for example, Catholics believed drunkenness merely 'offended' the Creator, while priests celebrated communion by drinking wine. Indeed, Rome's insistence on the use of wine explains one of the major differences between Protestant and Catholic approaches to alcohol (Sournia 1990: 136, cf. Raftery 1987). These differing historical and doctrinal positions undoubtedly influenced how mission organisations operating in Aboriginal reserves reacted to the dilemma of alcohol availability in the self-determination period. The introduction of self-determination policies from 1973 onwards marked the beginning

of the end of the era of Christian missions in Australia; however, missions were still influential contributors to the debate over wet canteens. Their guiding doctrinal principles and underlying philosophies were important in determining whether a community resisted or acceded to the pressure to instigate clubs. Pressure was exerted, both overtly and covertly, by members of the Welfare Branch and other government staff; the number of official inquiries, consultations and questioning of communities also served to exert pressure by drawing attention to the issue.

In the Northern Territory, the Aboriginal population had, in effect, been portioned out between the Catholic, Methodist (Methodist Overseas Mission), Congregational, Anglican, CMS and Lutheran mission societies. There were also Presbyterians, Baptists and non-denominational missionary societies, such as the United Aborigines Mission (UAM) and the Australian Inland Mission, which were strongly influenced by nineteenth-century American revivalism. As their respective missions developed, they each took different approaches to alcohol (see Table 1). Most mission organisations began to question and debate their protective role in the Indigenous arena during the 1960s, in the process, re-positioning themselves on matters of Aboriginal self-determination, land rights and the liquor question (Downing 1988, Harris 1998, Albrecht 2002). The CMS had been discussing a phased withdrawal from the training and social welfare aspects of its role in the Northern Territory since 1964. When the federal government's policy of self-determination was announced in 1973, the CMS was 'well on the way to divesting itself from positions of authority and control' (Harris 1998: 94). In 1974, the United Church in North Australia (UCNA)<sup>22</sup> held an inquiry into its own operations and future entitled *Free to Decide*, by which the UCNA meant that Aboriginal people were 'free to decide' their own futures. It saw itself as a 'liberating mission' facilitating the Aboriginal decision-making process (UCNA 1974). Consequently, the UCNA took an equivocal and non-aligned position on alcohol availability, believing that it had the right to oppose alcohol consumption only among its own church members.<sup>23</sup> In a submission to the Northern Territory Board of Inquiry into liquor laws, Reverend Jim Downing<sup>24</sup> wrote:

22 The UCNA was a cooperative venture between the Presbyterian, Methodist and Congregational churches. The Methodist Overseas Mission joined the UCNA in 1972. The Uniting Church in Australia was formed in 1977.

23 See the UCNA's submission to the House of Representatives inquiry into the present conditions of the Yirrkala People (1974).

24 Downing (1926–2009) was a Uniting Church minister, social worker and moderator of the Northern Synod of the Uniting Church.

### 3. THE ROLE OF BEER CANTEENS AND LICENSED CLUBS

Several statements have been made to the effect that wet canteens are a good thing and should be provided for all settlements. In some situations and under some circumstances they may be a good thing, but the statements still indicate that we Europeans know what is best for all Aboriginal communities. We continue to ignore the people's plea for help to control the effects of alcohol on their communities.<sup>25</sup>

In fact, the UCNA was opposed to the introduction of intoxicating liquors to Aboriginal communities unless the communities themselves desired a canteen or beer ration (Symons 1974).<sup>26</sup> It allowed the principle of supporting community decision-making to override its deeply held fears about proposals to make alcohol available in communities.



Fig. 8 Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, Yalata, 2015

Source: M Brady

25 Submission to the Northern Territory Committee of Inquiry on the Sale and Consumption of Intoxicating Liquor March 1973.

26 Jim Downing, interview, 16 August 2004.

The Lutherans generally took a tolerant approach towards alcohol and rejected prohibition (as had the Anglican synod in the 1920s). The Lutheran doctrine of the 'two kingdoms' distinguished between religious and political questions and, although they recognised the gravity of alcohol abuse, Lutherans declined to take a religious stance on it (Raftery 1987). The first mission organisation to obtain a licence to sell alcohol on an Aboriginal reserve was a Lutheran one—at Yalata, South Australia, in 1968.<sup>27</sup> Subsequently, a church member explained that the Lutheran Church was:

Not against drinking rights for Aborigines ... the sensible and correct approach ought to have been provision of drinking facilities on the reserves and missions so that Aborigines could enjoy the same conveniences as those enjoyed by citizens in our cities and country towns—drinking facilities right in their own communities. (Hansen 1969: 52)

The church should provide such facilities, 'and through precept and example demonstrate that rational drinking is compatible with responsible living, and within the demands of God and State' (Hansen 1972: 7). Concerned about models of deviant behaviour, Hansen warned that mission staff with drinking problems would not be tolerated. At the Finke River Mission, also known as Hermannsburg, the Lutheran Reverend Paul Albrecht used wine in communion because grape juice did not fit with the church's understanding of the practice of communion.<sup>28</sup> The mission, which took a positive approach to alcohol, instigated a short-lived experimental wet canteen for Aboriginal residents in 1972: it was not successful and was later regretted (Albrecht 2002: 45).<sup>29</sup>

By contrast, the Methodist and Presbyterian missions were opposed to the idea of providing even rationed amounts of alcohol and most of these communities have remained officially dry to this day.<sup>30</sup> At Oenpelli Mission, now Gunbalanya, the Anglican CMS was opposed to alcohol (it had also been opposed to the distribution of tobacco rations in the 1940s) (Harris 1998: 272–83). Alcohol was not ever permitted at

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27 This was possible once a section of the *Licensing Act 1967–73* (SA) authorised 'wet canteens' on Reserves (Eggleston 1976: 219).

28 Paul Albrecht, interview, 20 April 2005.

29 This was noted in correspondence to me from Bill Edwards (10 August 2004).

30 There were exceptions to this overall tendency, such as at Mornington Island, where the Presbyterian mission instigated a beer ration in 1973 and opened a canteen in 1976. The community had a growing problem with alcohol and the minister, Reverend Doug Belcher, personally favoured the idea of a canteen (Bill Edwards, pers comm, 10 August 2004, McKnight 2002).

the Presbyterian mission at Ernabella, now Pukatja, and mission staff and Aboriginal residents all took the position that the mission should remain dry. Mission superintendent, Reverend Bill Edwards, thought that most of the staff at Ernabella came from abstinence or temperance backgrounds, which probably influenced this policy. He recalled that, in 1971–72, the idea of wet canteens was floated by government departments as a way of teaching Aboriginal people ‘to drink socially’.

The debate over licensed clubs took a decisive turn in 1975 when a fact-finding committee was commissioned by the Australian Government to examine the causes and effects of alcoholism among Aboriginal people. As it happened, the team members were all associated with the Catholic Church through the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart Mission (MSC) at Port Keats, now Wadeye (Leary et al. 1975). The Leary report, which strongly endorsed the idea that providing beer to Aboriginal people in community-based clubs would encourage both good behaviour and moderation in consumption, led to the establishment of the Murrinh Patha Social Club.<sup>31</sup> The club’s rise and demise is described in Chapter 4. Two more clubs associated with the MSC opened in Tiwi Island communities. Clubs were also established at the Catholic communities of Daly River (Naiyu), Pirlingimpi (Melville Island), Wurakuwu (Bathurst Island) and Santa Teresa in central Australia. It is notable that five of the eight licensed clubs that still exist today in Northern Territory Aboriginal communities were previously Catholic missions. In two of these, the same Catholic brother was responsible for obtaining their liquor licences; somewhat ironically, he also set up the local AA groups.<sup>32</sup> Father John Leary, who ministered at several of these missions, later recalled: ‘In the beginning I had the idea you could teach ... civilised drinking, two or three cans, enough ... My bishop thought *assimilation was the way that people had to learn*’.<sup>33</sup>

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31 There were many other recommendations in the Leary report, and much of it was progressive. For example, the authors demonstrated an awareness of the influence of the contextual and contingent nature of much Aboriginal drinking, and the social and economic ‘setting’ within which Aboriginal people drank. They proposed that Aboriginal people suffered from a kind of ‘environmental alcoholism’.

32 Brother Andy Howley instigated beer rations at Nguui on Bathurst Island as well as at the Sacred Heart mission at Port Keats (Walsh 2005, Brady fieldnotes). He also travelled to the United States to investigate culturally relevant alcohol treatment approaches and instigated dry-out programs and AA-style support groups in some communities.

33 Father John Leary, interview, 16 August 2004 (emphasis added).

Table 1 Liquor status and mission associations of major Aboriginal communities, NT, 1987

Community	Liquor status Open	Liquor status Semi-restricted	Liquor status Restricted	Licensed Club	Association with mission*
<b>Northern communities</b>					
Angurugu		X			Anglican CMS
Bamyili (Barunga)		X		Club	–
Beswick		X		Club	–
Daguragu/Kalkarinji		X			Baptist
Daly River		X		Club	Catholic
Gapuwiyak			X		UCNA
Galiwin'ku			X		Methodist UCNA
Goulburn Is			X		Methodist UCNA
Garden Point (Pirlingimpi) (Tiwi)		X		Club	Catholic
Maningrida		X			Methodist UCNA
Milingimbi			X		Methodist UCNA
Minjilang			X		Methodist UCNA
Ngukurr		X			Anglican CMS
Nguiu (Tiwi)		X		Club	Catholic
Numbulwar			X		Anglican CMS
Oenpelli Gunbalanya		X		Club	Anglican CMS
Peppimenarti	X				Catholic
Port Keats		X		Club	Catholic
Ramingining			X		Methodist UCNA
Snake Bay Milikapiti (Tiwi)		X		Club	Catholic
Umbakumba		X		Club	Anglican CMS
Yirrkala		X			Methodist
<b>Centre communities</b>					
Areyonga		X			Lutheran
Docker River			X		Lutheran

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Community	Liquor status Open	Liquor status Semi-restricted	Liquor status Restricted	Licensed Club	Association with mission*
Haasts Bluff	X				Lutheran
Hermannsburg			X		Lutheran
Kintore			X		Lutheran
Lake Nash	X				–
Lajamanu			X		Baptist
Papunya			X		Lutheran
Sta Teresa			X		Catholic
Warrabri (Ali Curung)			X		–
Willowra			X		Lutheran
Utopia			X		–
Yuendumu		X			Baptist

\*Not necessarily an actual mission establishment

Source: Author's data

Over the years, there were further experiments with beer rations and rudimentary canteens in many communities in the Northern Territory. By 1988, there were six on-premises licensed clubs in Aboriginal communities.<sup>34</sup> In mid-2007, there were eight clubs licensed for on-premises consumption and two licensed for off-premises sales only.<sup>35</sup> By 2013, there were still eight on-premises licensed facilities in discrete Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory.<sup>36</sup> In South Australia, the only licensed canteen in an Aboriginal community was at Yalata Lutheran Mission; it opened in 1969 and closed in 1981. Significantly, the closure of disastrous clubs, such as those at Santa Teresa and Yalata, did not prevent people, usually outsiders, from suggesting that they be reinstated.

In Queensland, it was government rather than mission action that prompted the establishment of 'canteens', as they were referred to in that state. Following the establishment of Aboriginal councils on settlements

34 These were at Daly River, Port Keats, Pularumpi, Bathurst Island, Milikapiti (Melville Island) and Gunbalanya (Oenpelli).

35 These were at Daly River, Nguiu and Wurankuwu (Bathurst Island), Milikapiti, Pirlangimpi (Melville Island), Gunbalanya, Kalkaringi and Peppimenarti. Beswick and Barunga had off-licences.

36 These were at Beswick, Gunbalanya, Kalkaringi, Milikapiti, Nguiu, Peppimenarti, Pirlangimpi and Wurankuwu.

and missions in 1971, beer could be sold in communities under restrictive licensing conditions. Subsequently, canteens were opened at Aurukun, Bamaga, Injinoo, Kowanyama, Lockhart River, Napranum, Pormpuraaw, Mornington Island, Palm Island, Woorabinda, Cherbourg and Yarrabah. Most of the mainland canteens and taverns were closed down as a result of Justice Tony Fitzgerald's report in 2001 and later decisions made by the Queensland Government aimed at reducing extraordinary levels of alcohol consumption and alcohol-related harm.<sup>37</sup> Only three canteens still exist (*Koori Mail* 2013: 12). In the Torres Strait, Saibai, Erub and Mer have licensed community clubs.<sup>38</sup>

## Mixed motivations for clubs

Public opinion and official statements reveal an uneasy and contradictory mix of underlying motivations for these licensed facilities, especially in the early years of their development. In some cases, whether a community applied for a liquor licence depended on the religious denomination of the relevant mission settlement, or the attitude of a particularly influential missionary or superintendent. In other cases, there were contributing local circumstances prompting the decision, such as the desire to circumvent a worrisome takeaway liquor outlet nearby. Rudimentary voting occurred in some instances; community meetings were held that often resulted in sizeable pockets of disgruntled residents, usually women, feeling that their views had not been heard. While there were always residents, sometimes even a majority, in favour of having a club, substantial numbers were also always opposed—and women made up the bulk of non-drinkers. However, until the mid-1980s, Aboriginal women were not represented on councils and were usually left out of discussions about alcohol availability, both in the communities and in consultations with the Liquor Commission (East Arnhem Health Workers 1978).

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37 See volume 2 of the Cape York Justice Study (Fitzgerald 2001: 50–1) where Fitzgerald notes the conflict of interest borne by community councils' profiteering from sales of alcohol at canteens for which the council is the licensee. Legislation passed by the Queensland Labor Government in 2008 prohibited any local community council from operating and profiting from canteens; this resulted in the closure of most canteens, as they were unable to find alternative suitable private licensees. The legislation banned all councils from owning a licence, not just those in Indigenous communities.

38 As at October 2017.

## Stimulating sociable drinking

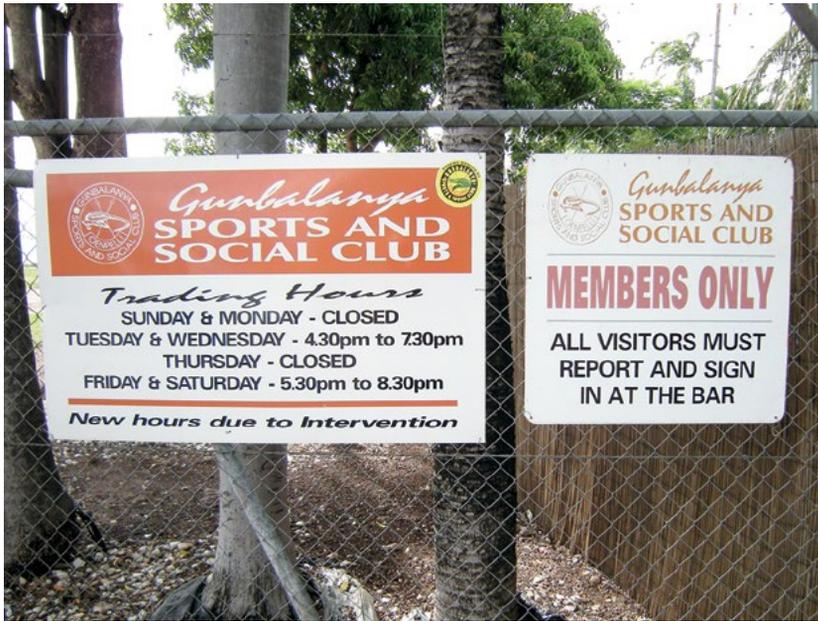


Fig. 9 Membership signs at Gunbalanya Club, 2013

Source: M Brady

The 1975 Leary report encapsulated the aspiration—the hope—for the adoption of more moderate, sociable drinking styles in Aboriginal communities. In some quarters, there were hopes that the clubs might form part of larger community centres that would counsel problem drinkers; in this way, ‘the Aborigines themselves [would] have a responsibility as regards the education and rehabilitation of the problem members of their community’.<sup>39</sup> Clubs were espoused as the antidote to a variety of evils—uncontrolled access to takeaway liquor, drink driving and drunken misbehaviour on the streets of rural towns—and as agents in the process of learning better drinking habits. It was not only Aboriginal people who were thought to benefit from the controlled drinking environment provided by clubs: investigating the effect of increased mining activity

39 Powell, Police Commissioner to Symons DAA, Adelaide, 19/3/1979 [GRS 6624/1/P, DAA 520/68].

and influx of European mineworkers in Arnhem Land, the Fox Report<sup>40</sup> recommended that clubs rather than hotels be established.<sup>41</sup> As recently as 2008, prominent Territorian Ted Egan, previously of the Welfare Branch and later the Administrator of the Northern Territory, proposed that off-premises drinking should be banned throughout the Northern Territory, and that licensed premises such as bars and hotels should all be (re)licensed as clubs, where people signed in as members—'punched the bundy'—and were subject to the clubs' rules, regulations and conventions.

## Control over Aboriginal movement

Early arguments put forward by outsiders in favour of clubs reveal an underlying desire to control Aboriginal people, not just their alcohol consumption. In colonial times, the practice of rationing food and tobacco replaced violence as a mode of government, largely because it was found to be more successful at rendering intercultural relationships peaceful and predictable. As a result, rationing carries with it a history of control over Aboriginal lives, as Tim Rowse documented in *White Flour, White Power* (1998). During the assimilation era, Aboriginal people began to orient their lives, at least in part, around the receipt of European goods such as flour, tea, sugar and tobacco; beer rations in missions and settlements functioned in much the same way, encouraging people to remain 'tethered' to the mission and dissuading them from ranging further afield.

Older Aboriginal people, particularly women, were positive about the fact that clubs would control the mobility of their husbands and sons: they often supported proposals for clubs in the hope that they would keep the men and boys at home, divert drinkers from nearby or distant outlets and lessen the risk of car accidents. It was also hoped that clubs would put an end to dangerous drinking camps and groups of people drinking in the scrub or the 'long grass' in towns.

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40 Also known as the Ranger Inquiry, the Fox Report (1977) led by Justice Fox, influenced the subsequent development of uranium mining at Nabarlek and Ranger in the Northern Territory and Olympic Dam in South Australia.

41 This was a plan for the regional population as a whole, not just the Indigenous population. A licensed club was established in the mining town of Jabiru as a result of these recommendations; however, its history has been marked by repeated attempts to sell takeaway liquor and become, in effect, a hotel (d'Abbs & Jones 1996).

However, it is noteworthy that the most vociferous supporters of licensed clubs in bush communities were often the white citizens and mayors of towns such as Ceduna, Alice Springs and Katherine that have large Aboriginal populations in their hinterland. Non-Aboriginal town-based residents and politicians have been keen to dissuade Aboriginal people from visiting towns (because of their capacity to drink and make trouble), preferring instead that they be 'out of sight, out of mind' (d'Abbs 1998). In 1997, there were a rash of calls for wet canteens covering a wide geographical area. In April that year, the Northern Territory Liquor Commissioner, Peter Allen, announced that 'drunks wandering the streets with takeaway liquor could no longer be tolerated'. Wet canteens and clubs, he claimed, were an 'option that cannot be ignored'.<sup>42</sup> The Territory's Chief Minister stated publicly that he wanted an end to 'dry' communities. The pressure for clubs spread across the region, with communities pointedly being asked, yet again, to vote on whether they wanted to have licensed outlets. Two Territorians with long-term mission and community experience, were outraged. They argued that, by failing to appreciate and understand past failures, those who were pushing for wet canteens, including the politicians, were 'not doing their homework'.<sup>43</sup> Nevertheless, in 2011, the Alice Springs deputy mayor again called for wet canteens in bush communities, places where 'the family can sit down and have a meal together, and have a beer together'.<sup>44</sup> In May that year, numerous Territory politicians called on the federal minister for Indigenous Affairs to allow for wet canteens to be established, specifically to stop problem drinkers from 'drifting' into Alice Springs (Murdoch & Skelton 2011).

Over the years, town-based Aboriginal organisations have also joined the debate over clubs. In the early 1980s, the Central Australian Aboriginal Legal Aid Service, based at Alice Springs, called for wet canteens to be established out bush (Collmann 1988: 50). In 1982, the Alice Springs town camper's representative body, known as Tangentyere Council, wrote to communities in the catchment area asking them to consider having canteens to reduce the drinking problem in town (O'Connor 1983). In doing so, Tangentyere was trying to protect the interests of its constituents in town camps who were dealing with drunken visitors from the bush.

42 *Centralian Advocate* 18 April 1997: 1.

43 These were Pastor Paul Albrecht and Gary Stoll. *Alice Springs News* 4(42) 1997: 3.

44 *ABC News* 14 January 2011.

In South Australia, one Lutheran commentator took the control idea even further, advocating drinking facilities in Aboriginal settlements as the means by which church authorities could retain 'absolute control' (Hansen 1972: 7, cf. Brady & Palmer 1984).<sup>45</sup> In the context of statements such as these, it is salutary, and not entirely irrelevant, to remember that during the apartheid era in South Africa, the native affairs bureaucracy provided segregated beer halls for black mine labourers. The authorities saw beer halls as a means of bringing the leisure activities of the black population under state scrutiny and control. By providing beer-halls, South African authorities hoped 'to remove African alcohol consumption from white view, and thus create at least the illusion of order' (Ambler & Crush 1992: 19, La Housse 1992).

## To raise revenue

One widespread motivation for the establishment of clubs in Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory was to keep cash circulating in the communities, rather than losing it to publicans in town; the linked option of devoting profits to local causes was also attractive. This reasoning continues to be heard in arguments in favour of establishing clubs, and retaining them once established, today.

In Queensland, in the 1970s, the rationale for clubs was clear. There were no aspirations for the clubs to teach civilised drinking; instead, the clubs—appropriately referred to as 'canteens'—were instigated as a means of raising revenue. The Bjelke-Petersen Government actively and overtly promoted beer canteens as a way of generating revenue for community councils and shires to pay for local services (Martin 1993, McKnight 2002, Moran 2013). The sudden availability of alcohol in previously dry communities caused turmoil. In the beginning, the income spent on alcohol consumption was lost to communities because the profits from liquor sales 'streamed into departmental coffers through the Welfare Fund' (Kidd 1997: 302). Later, club takings became a source of substantial and highly valued 'untied' monies that local community–government councils could use at their discretion. The desire for profitability acted as a natural brake on any moves to curb sales as a harm-reduction measure. The commercial imperative for local (Aboriginal) government councils

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45 This thinking was revisited in 2008 in light of government plans for large Aboriginal communities to become 'growth towns' with provision for 'normal' commercial enterprises such as licensed restaurants and clubs (Northern Territory Licensing Commission 2009: 8).

to maximise sales was so strong in Queensland, and the conflict of interest so great, that the Fitzgerald Inquiry recommended—and the state government agreed—that their right to sell alcohol and profit from the sales should be removed. Fitzgerald (2001) recommended that clubs be run by completely separate, private interests<sup>46</sup> and that local government councils be provided with compensation (cf. Martin 1998).<sup>47</sup>

## Enacting rights to drink

While there were some less benevolent motivations on the part of interest groups, there were also mixed motivations for the establishment of clubs within Aboriginal communities themselves. Some Northern Territory communities with existing clubs demonstrated complex reasons for wanting not only to maintain their clubs, but to make them more appealing. Clubs were seen as recognising the ‘rights’ of drinkers; conversely, they were viewed as bargaining tools that placated the drinking members of a community by ‘giving them something’. For example, in a discussion in 2005 over the potential loosening of conditions of an existing community licence, one community member stated:

Grog is a big problem here. We are slaves to all you drunken mob ... There’s a lot of domestic violence and underage drinking. But we can’t deny the drinkers’ rights too. We gotta give them something too. Otherwise we should tell them to go to [nearest town]. We gotta balance their rights. Give them their rights too, all you sober people. So the community’s got to support the drinking men ... I’m starting to live with this grog problem. Balance it out, sober and drunken man. All these grog men say they agree as long as we give them something here so they stay and work. We can’t frighten them by making them go to [the nearest town].<sup>48</sup>

46 Naturally enough, Fitzgerald’s recommendations were immediately disputed by local councils. For example, at Bamaga, the council said that their community should not be included in the plans as ‘it is a peaceful community with a well controlled canteen’ (*Torres News* 3–9 May 2002: 1).

47 Following Fitzgerald, the Queensland Government insisted on transferring liquor licences away from community councils and shires to community-based boards, with canteen profits to be audited separately under strict new licensing conditions (Queensland Government 2002, Dalley 2012, Moran 2013). In 2008, the government went further, in effect closing down most canteens and clubs in Aboriginal communities. McKnight (2002: 211) pointed out that regional bodies or local boards would still see people struggling for political clout and the accoutrements of political power.

48 Excerpt from a Northern Territory Licensing Commission hearing regarding an application for a restricted area in the Maranboh district (5 May 2005: 17).

Similar comments were made elsewhere:

We have this problem. How can we manage it in some way? Got to be realistic. They love their alcohol. If you cut off their alcohol it will drive it underground. They're not going to say 'oh, I'll just stop drinking', they'll just live like a homeless person to get a charge. I never drank. I see the impact it has.<sup>49</sup>

## The social, cultural and political outcomes

Despite aspirational rhetoric about the ability of clubs to teach 'civilised' drinking, no one had any idea how to put this into practice. There was no systematic policy process guiding the rollout or management of clubs in Aboriginal communities; no in-house policy advice or training. Nor were there networks to link club managers, licensing agencies and health departments with health professionals and clinical psychologists. In Chapter 1, I mentioned that, during the 1960s and 1970s, researchers in Australia and overseas were examining behavioural psychology and social-learning models of drinking, training alcoholics to sip slowly and self-monitor, helping drinkers to monitor their levels of intoxication and providing lessons in alcohol and its effects. However, there is no evidence that any targeted program such as this found its way to the clubs in Aboriginal communities. The most that was offered was general information about alcohol and its effects.<sup>50</sup>

## Misconstruing the learning model

When the clubs were first established, and for most of the years to follow, Aboriginal people were (somehow) expected to adopt moderate drinking habits simply by being provided with a limited number of cans of beer. This narrow interpretation of the proper 'setting' for alcohol consumption was not enough to inculcate a habitually moderated intake. In the 'drug, set and setting' formula designed by Norman Zinberg (1984) as a way of understanding drug-related behaviours, setting refers to more than

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49 Brady fieldnotes, March 2013.

50 In the 1990s, the Northern Territory Living with Alcohol (LWA) program staff who visited communities to discuss safer drinking options would visit the community club if there was one, but there were no structured educational interventions in the clubs. Twenty years after the first clubs were opened, LWA published a useful guide to 'creating safer drinking environments' (Hunter & Clarence 1996).

environmental or physical settings. It also refers to the social context, or social setting, in which information is transmitted in numerous formal and informal ways. Setting is not static. Crucially, Zinberg's notion of setting *interacts* with the nature of the drug and the 'set' of the individual—their socialisation, personality and attitudes. In the case of Aboriginal drinkers, these elements often combined to value inebriation over moderation. The clubs provided a physical setting within which regulated sales would naturally limit the amount people could drink. However, they could not (at least in their early versions) influence an individual's 'set'—their pre-existing positive values associated with drinking to excess. There is no evidence that Aboriginal people who drank in clubs learned and *internalised* a restrained pattern of consumption that they practised when drinking elsewhere. Indeed, the evidence is quite to the contrary (Brady & Palmer 1984, d'Abbs 1987).

In a sense, the level of naivety on the part of mission and government authorities is surprising. By the time of the first clubs, anthropologists in Australia were publishing detailed ethnographies that described how, for many Aboriginal people, the goal of drinking was about achieving a particular kind of sociality around inebriation, rather than moderation. In the 1950s and 1960s, Jeremy Beckett (1965) demonstrated that vigorous drinking was highly valued among Aboriginal men in outback New South Wales towns. He observed that there were numerous social disadvantages in not drinking heavily, as men who failed to drink in the expected manner led 'a more restricted social life' (43). Later, Basil Sansom (1977, 1980) characterised the Darwin fringe camps as 'free grogging communities' (51) in which people unapologetically lived 'longa grog' (44) and aimed to become roaringly and helplessly drunk. Rory O'Connor (1984: 175) observed in the early 1980s that people in Alice Springs were 'clinging tenaciously' to heavy-drinking patterns that led to disease, injury, loss and family breakdown.

The notion that providing rations of alcohol alone would 'teach' moderate drinking also failed to take account of the *interpersonal* social setting—that is, the powerful influence of social modelling and the associated idea that people conform generally to what their fellows are doing. O'Connor (1984) referred to the 'contingent' drunkenness of Aboriginal people living in Alice Springs town camps; he argued that any loss of control over the amount of alcohol consumed *resided in the group*, not the individual. Dismissing accepted individualised notions of alcoholism, O'Connor (1984) represented problem drinking as group dependence

or contingent drunkenness—a style of drinking that depended for its existence upon the correct physical and social environment. The Alice Springs town camps provided the ideal physical and social environment for heavy drinking. O'Connor argued that even if problem drinkers attended treatment programs or group therapy, they would inevitably conform to the influence of the group and re-adopt its behaviour on their return. His position was borne out by d'Abbs (1987), who found that the communities whose residents had the highest rate of protective custodies for intoxication in Darwin were the communities with licensed clubs at home. In other words, people who may have drunk moderately at clubs in their own communities were not doing so in Darwin: whatever they may have 'learned' was not being carried forward into another environment.

The clubs were trying to mould socially embedded behaviours, values and relationships into something else; instead, they created a self-selected group of consociates and peers who shared largely similar desires for the drinking experience and who were now consuming alcohol together, within settings that were atypical and, in effect, racially segregated. Rather than clubs moulding drinkers, drinkers were moulding the clubs to suit their own purposes. In a club environment, most drinkers share the same goal: namely, how to accomplish the desired heightened mood with a limited amount of alcohol and within a limited time frame. This has, in effect, created a remote Aboriginal community version of the Australian six o'clock swill. As one club manager put it, they are 'on a mission' to get drunk. Everyone knows when closing time is (in some clubs it is announced by an industrial-style siren). Achieving the desired heightened mood is managed in several ways: by drinking 'quick way'—that is, drinking the last beer really quickly to get a charge before leaving; saving up drinks until just before closing time; or waiting until the last minute to buy drinks (Dalley 2012). In some locations, drinkers invent subterfuges or gamble with drinks or drink tokens to accumulate more than their allowance of beer cans.

For around two decades or more, most of the clubs bore no resemblance to the places imagined by Leary and many government officials: they had no 'proper facilities for drinking' or 'family atmosphere'. At Yalata, for example, although the canteen had been intended to interrupt grog running from the nearest town and to 'help people to drink beer in

a controlled and sensible way',<sup>51</sup> the facility comprised a large hall with a concrete floor and iron roof, a counter across one end, a concrete apron at the front and outside toilets. A team of psychologists from Adelaide University who studied the canteen observed, drily, that it could in no way be considered '*comparable to the pub on the corner*' (Penny 1979: 4, original emphasis). Ten years after the canteen was licensed, a DAA report stated categorically:

There is no evidence of developing 'civilised' drinking habits. The customers drain their cans rapidly and then give the appearance of being left lost and wondering about what to do next ... A shallow survey of the scene would indicate that the beer rationing scheme has little to commend it and in fact could be harmful. (Cooke 1978: 12)

There was no evidence that providing beer at the Yalata canteen had decreased the consumption of port, which was purchased from a roadhouse 60 km away, and the DAA noted that non-drinkers had no difficulty in obtaining a ration of beer, which they promptly gave to others. The beer ration was further sabotaged by drinking men who convened games of two-up outside the canteen using their beer cans as betting chips, a regular event witnessed by myself and a colleague in 1981 (Brady & Palmer 1984). As we wrote then, the beer ration merely whetted the appetites of those who wanted stronger drinks. Yalata canteen drinkers then proceeded to commission local drivers of private cars (known colloquially as 'taxis') to make trips to other sources of alcohol in town.

Learning 'civilised' drinking was not possible in Queensland either, because, like Yalata, for many years, the canteens in Aboriginal communities simply sold open cans of beer in sheds without seats, food or social amenities. At Kowanyama, in 1973, the canteen was a window through which DAA officers handed out the daily ration of cans: two, then four and later six (Moran 2013).

There are many examples of the abject failure of clubs in Aboriginal communities to inculcate moderation, especially in their early years. At Aurukun, in far north Queensland, the ration at the club in the 1980s was two jugs of beer per drinker, three nights a week. Since each jug contained 1.14 L of beer, this rationing practice effectively normalised and institutionalised the consumption of large amounts of alcohol. Under

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<sup>51</sup> This was stated by Don Dunstan, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs in South Australia (SRG 186, Series 174–82, SLSA).

pressure from their male kin, members of the community council were persuaded to increase these amounts (Martin 1993). Some Queensland clubs had no limits at all, and figures from one community collected in 1982 showed that each drinker consumed an average of seven jugs per night (Commonwealth of Australia 1977, Fua & Lumsden 1984). At OenPELLI, now Gunbalanya, the council objected to uncontrolled alcohol sales from a nearby store and successfully took over the licence, opening its own Sports and Social Club.<sup>52</sup> In 1984, Sue Kesteven, one of a team of researchers engaged in a study of the impact of uranium mining in the region, reported that sales of beer were not being rationed at the Gunbalanya Sports and Social Club, and that there was open flouting of the dry area legislation. By 1996, the club was reported to be well managed, with better security, a pleasant beer garden, entertainment and a system of banning those who misbehaved. However, alcohol-related violence was not uncommon (d'Abbs & Jones 1996: 46).



Fig. 10 Beer garden at Gunbalanya Club, 2013

Source: M Brady

<sup>52</sup> After failing to have the Border Store's licence cancelled, the Gunbalanya Council bought the lease and allowed the store's licence to lapse (Kesteven 1984: 193).

In recent years, the rules have been tightened at all community-based clubs in the Northern Territory, primarily as a result of the intervention undertaken by the Australian Government in 2007 (Shaw et al. 2015).<sup>53</sup> Under new regulations, community clubs can only sell mid-strength or low-alcohol beer (3 per cent or less) in cans (not kegs); they can only open for four days a week and cannot make takeaway sales; and they must make hot food available. These regulations were targeted at curbing what had been, in some instances, lax serving practices and increasingly laissez-faire attitudes. For the most part, the eight existing Northern Territory clubs have made genuine efforts (often under duress) to implement safer service and to try to inculcate moderation and sociable drinking practices.

For a particular type of drinker in remote communities, twenty-first-century clubs provide a sociable venue where Aboriginal men and women, as well as non-Aboriginal staff and visitors, can relax with a few mid-strength beers and have something to eat before going home at around 7 or 8 pm. Troublemakers are banned for varying periods of time, plentiful signage lists the rules of behaviour, food (of varying quality) is available, there is music, television and pool tables, and some clubs provide free bottled water as people leave. Children are not allowed to enter; instead, they peer through the wire netting surrounding open-air beer gardens, observing everything and waiting for their parents to emerge. For determined drinkers, the club is never enough. Recent regulatory changes away from 'heavy' drinks (i.e. those with high alcohol content) to lower alcohol content beers, have inevitably prompted these drinkers to go elsewhere. This is the price of implementing strict limits on sales and trying to provide a moderation-inducing environment; all clubs have lost some customers and income from sales since the 2007 restrictions were imposed.

## The vulnerable nature of Aboriginal authority

It is not difficult to suggest reasons why clubs in Aboriginal communities largely failed to achieve ascribed goals. One reason was an overly optimistic expectation that local people would be able to manage the

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53 In October 2007, as part of the NTER, the Australian Government implemented restrictions that applied to all social clubs in remote Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory. In Queensland, governance arrangements for the clubs and 'taverns' of Cape York were dramatically altered following the *Cape York Justice Study* that documented widespread binge drinking, poor management of community licences and rampant alcohol-related violence (Fitzgerald 2001).

clubs and enforce the rules, and that they would do so in a disinterested manner with the welfare of the community at heart. As with the village clubs in Papua New Guinea, it was assumed that if clubs were located in Aboriginal communities, Aboriginal traditional social controls, enforced by elders, would reinforce rules of behaviour and help to uphold the agreed in-house policies, thus contributing to the overall project of socialising drinkers into moderate consumption. However, by the time the first clubs were opened, anthropologists, as well as documenting the values attached to heavy drinking and intoxication, had noted the absence of individuals with clearly defined legislative functions in Aboriginal communities, and had commented on the widespread belief that ordinary men had neither the right nor the authority to make rules that others must follow (Meggitt 1975, Myers 1979). There was also the matter of whose land a club stood on and, as a corollary, who had authority over misbehaviour on that land (Downing 1988). Experienced missionaries expressed doubt about the extent of Aboriginal authority over interpersonal disputes and social disorder; church workers, such as Paul Albrecht (2002: 39), wrote of the 'authority vacuum' that lay between Indigenous cultural authority figures and the civic roles of councils or local governments. Perhaps the most thoughtful consideration of this matter was provided by Charles Rowley (1970) who questioned the common assumption that Aboriginal people had a physiological inability to resist alcohol. Challenging the often-repeated view that Aboriginal society did not develop its own controls to deal with alcohol because there was no 'law' about alcohol in 'traditional' Aboriginal culture, he argued that:

Aborigines suffered the worst effects of alcohol, not only because it offered to individuals temporary escape from what seemed a pointless existence but also because of the vulnerability and nature of authority in Aboriginal society. That there was no 'law' about alcohol was an initial cause of vulnerability, no doubt, but the fact does not in itself explain why Aboriginal society did not develop controls to deal with it ... There were, of course, as the anthropologists have shown, social controls in each group and ... leadership ... exerted by the men of high training and status. But social controls of a traditional nature are especially vulnerable when the whole basis of the tradition is in question; even more so when, as in this case, it has been wrecked by rapid depopulation, loss of control of the land, and the obvious disregard of indigenous religious assumptions by the newcomers ... and probably the first use of alcohol had the effect it has continued to have of reducing the great man to an object of ridicule; and of giving to the doubting and tentatively dissident youth courage to defy him. (30–1)

There appeared to be a degree of ignorance among policymakers about the limited range of Aboriginal authority, and little acknowledgment or understanding of the entirely socially normative ethic of non-interference that exists within Aboriginal society, resulting in a high tolerance of the (mis)behaviour of others (Brady 2004: 60). As well as misconstruing the nature of authority, government, welfare and some mission authorities assumed, incorrectly, that even small communities would be cohesive enough to manage the clubs, determine what constituted alcohol-related harm and create strategies for reducing it (Gray 1996: 409). In reality, there was little frank debate at community meetings and people generally offered poor solutions to problems.<sup>54</sup>

Clubs that initially seemed to operate in the intended manner soon increased the allowable ration, causing the system to deteriorate rapidly: several clubs were halted abruptly. Rudimentary clubs and beer rations came and went in several locations. At Hermannsburg, for example, in the 1970s, a newly inaugurated Aboriginal council issued two cans of beer on three or four occasions per week, which worked well. However, Aboriginal elders were unable to enforce the rules. Bowing to pressure from kin, more and more cans were distributed and, within a year, the missionaries—having reached the conclusion that the idea of moderation made little sense to Aboriginal people—called a halt to proceedings.<sup>55</sup> Sue Kesteven (1984: 201–2) wrote perceptively about the difficulties of community control over alcohol sales and demands for special favours:

This constant pressure from Aboriginal people for waiving of rules in each particular case is one of the main drawbacks to finding a congenial, enforceable set of rules which suits the entire population. Those in favour of drink seem to thwart the intentions of rules that they themselves may set up when sober or when not in need of alcohol. Until they come to terms with their contradictions, and the implications of continued heavy drinking, this problem will not be solved except by the imposition of strictly applied rules, policed by non-Aborigines.

Even when the rules for ‘civilised’ drinking are made by the community itself, the group pressure to waive such rules is strong. As Kesteven’s research demonstrated, such problems are associated with social expectations and norms embedded within Aboriginal sociality and, as

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<sup>54</sup> Council members at Yalata, for example, railed at drinkers while being grog-runners themselves; drinking camps (often without water, shade or access to help) were frequently suggested as solutions to noisy drinking in the community.

<sup>55</sup> Paul Albrecht, interview, 20 April 2005.

such, are not necessarily solvable through regulatory mechanisms. Senior men and women in a community are often unwilling to intervene and, if they do, their attempts to deal with ration-orting or drunken behaviour often have little effect. Indeed, as illustrated in the case of Wadeye and its drinking club in the late 1980s, discussed in the next chapter, it would take a serious alcohol-related crisis or tragedy to trigger decisive leadership, and group acquiescence in that leadership.<sup>56</sup>

## Power, money, largesse

As beer rationing systems became institutionalised into canteens, and the canteens were transformed into clubs (some of which became extremely lucrative), it became apparent that there had been a failure to consider the corrupting implications of the potentially large income that would be generated by sales of beer. The Aboriginal associations, non-Aboriginal managers or local community councils running clubs soon found that they could make significant profits from the sale of alcohol. Local discord over the proper distribution of funds notwithstanding, the money-making capacity of the clubs transformed them into powerful (some would say *the* most powerful) economic and political institutions within Aboriginal communities (Martin 1993, d'Abbs 1998, McKnight 2002). In some cases, this power came to be concentrated in the hands of one individual—the club manager—or else a very small group of Aboriginal people, who could both receive and confer favours. In 1998, d'Abbs observed that the high income generated by some clubs created a concentration of power and problems of governance; that there was little scrutiny by community members; and that numerous social and political difficulties were caused by one person (or a small group) having a virtual monopoly of control over a highly valued resource (682). Echoing the historical arguments between temperance advocates and community-owned licensed premises, d'Abbs noted that a community's economy could become alcohol-driven, with club profits representing 'untied' grants, and that clubs could create a symbiotic relationship in which drinkers became dependent on the club (for their social life and entertainment) and the club became dependent on high levels of consumption (for its continued economic prosperity).

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56 Yalata Community Council only took decisive action against alcohol after the death of five community members in 1991 (Brady et al. 2003).

Temperance advocates in previous decades had voiced warnings about how alcohol profits could be used by community-owned hotels to ‘buy off’ critics and earn themselves a false respectability. By donating to community causes (such as charter aircraft, swimming pools, playground equipment, sports jerseys and facilities, and covering the cost of funerals) community leaders, the governing committees of clubs and the (non-Aboriginal) managers who run them, have done just that, thereby making themselves (somewhat) immune to criticism. Insofar as the ‘business’ of the clubs allowed for the emergence of a stratum of community leaders with access to a stream of money that they could dispose of without being accountable to any outsiders, these developments were arguably aligned with self-determination.<sup>57</sup> At Kowanyama in Queensland, for example, the council directed most of its \$1 million canteen profit to a mothers and babies centre, women’s shelter, school bus, after-hours security for nurses, and ranger and outstation program (Moran 2013): who could complain about that? However, these same councils in Queensland communities are also responsible for the peace, order and welfare of their populations, thus creating clear and irresolvable conflicts of interest and principle (Martin 1998: 4, Fitzgerald 2001: 42).<sup>58</sup> David McKnight (2002: 115) observed that whether or not the canteen on Mornington Island used its profits for ‘good works’, they were obtained at a horrendous social cost, and that the canteen itself often threatened community wellbeing.<sup>59</sup>

## A convenient tool for politicians

An analysis of the history of the policies that underpinned the establishment of licensed clubs shows that there has been a major shift away from the original ideas about their role in habituating people to moderate drinking. During recent elections in the Northern Territory and Queensland, some politicians promised to re-examine and to liberalise alcohol availability through clubs.<sup>60</sup> Such proposals are invariably fed by

57 Thanks to Tim Rowse for making this point.

58 At Yarrabah, in 2002, the council chairman said that the pub (the club) was the only enterprise they had; it made \$200,000 a year, all of which was channelled into housing maintenance and employment opportunities (Hodge & Emerson 2002: 3).

59 Mac Marshall and colleagues (1982: 456) suggested that similar problems in Papua New Guinea could be avoided by making provincial liquor licences government owned and removing the profit motive.

60 This happened during the election in 2012. (See *Courier Mail* 2013.)

'moral panic'.<sup>61</sup> An outbreak of (white) citizen outrage over a particular incident, or surge of Aboriginal visitors to a regional town, prompts the suggestion that Aboriginal people from communities would be less likely to come to town if they could drink in their home communities. Mayors of regional towns, town councillors, politicians or the police (often a newly arrived officer), propose wet canteens or clubs for those communities as the 'perfect' solution to public drinking and drunkenness among Aboriginal people. A spike of policy interest leads to a surge of public commentary and media interest and renewed political pressure for clubs to be established in communities. Coroners investigating alcohol-related deaths in remote areas become involved, receiving submissions from local interest groups that include recommendations for clubs. Free to make wide-ranging policy recommendations and politically loaded observations in their reports, some coroners conclude that wet canteens might solve the problem,<sup>62</sup> others warn against them as disastrous.<sup>63</sup>

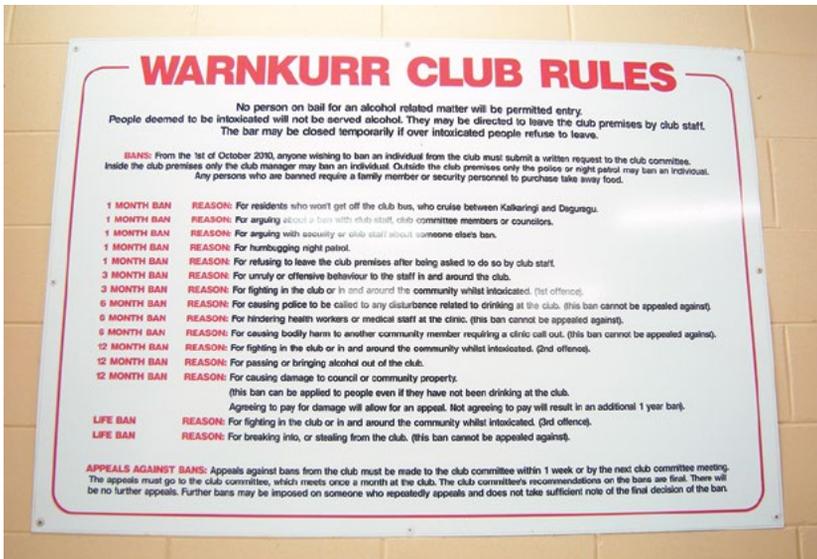


Fig. 11 Warnkurr Club Rules, 2013

Source: M Brady

61 The phrase 'moral panic' was coined by deviance sociologist Stanley Cohen (1972, cf. Goode & Ben-Yehuda 1994).

62 This was the case when W Donald, Northern Territory Coroner, investigated five separate Aboriginal deaths near an outback takeaway liquor outlet in 1997.

63 See Coroner's Court of South Australia (2011).

## Local political struggles

Early in their history, the clubs provided the opportunity for a different kind of localised political struggle. Depriving individuals of access to a community's club has proved to be a powerful means of social control, and this power can be wielded by various groups, including local community councils, club committees and individual managers, the police, and other bodies within communities. The ability to ban individuals for poor behaviour can be a useful tool with which to attempt to condition better drinking practices; clubs can 'bar off' people for spitting, abuse, failing to leave the premises and for drunkenness. As long ago as 1980, drunkenness at the Leichhardt River canteen was punished under such rules put in place by the police.

Clubs often display long lists of names of people who have been banned and the length of the ban: some people are banned for life. Clubs also display lists of the behaviours that will result in banning (e.g. abusing staff or fighting). This enables drinkers to object if they feel they have been banned for no good reason: 'banned for cold blood'.<sup>64</sup> In most cases, the lists of proscribed behaviours are compiled by community members who sit on club committees and the manager. Some bans, or threats of bans, are beyond what might be considered reasonable in any other licensed premises: to some they seem overly authoritarian. Some clubs have become a de facto community policeman, pressuring community members to fulfil civic responsibilities. For example, a plumber in one community who was tired of children tampering with his building site, displayed a sign that read: 'Keep Out! Children found on this site parent's will be banned from the Club' (Shaw et al. 2015: 121).

Exasperated by parental neglect, community members often suggest that *other* community members be 'barred off' the club for neglecting their children, or not sending them to school. In other cases, family members may approach a club manager and ask for a miscreant to be banned until he or she has made the necessary reparations for an offence. A club manager may approach the community's health staff and ask for the names of perpetrators of an assault, or the names of pregnant women, to ban them from the club. Needless to say, such requests are usually politely refused.

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<sup>64</sup> 'Banned for cold blood' = banned for no good reason.

In the absence of an existing 'traditional' authority that might extend to personal misbehaviour, the display of lists of 'banned behaviours', the fact that they frequently extend into the realm of personal conduct, and the alacrity with which Aboriginal people themselves propose deprivation of access to the club as a form of social control, represent a new form of Indigenous authority that has evolved under 'self-determination'. Beyond reasonable behaviour at the club itself, the lists reveal a desire on the part of community members and club committees for there to be some degree of order and civic responsibility in the community more broadly. The existence of the lists also suggests the degree of impotence felt by the civic-minded majority when trying to persuade their fellows to behave better, to send their children to school and to feed and provide for them (Myers 1979, Brady 1992, Purtill 2017).

## The unresolved challenges of clubs

The debate about licensed social clubs in remote communities is unlikely to be resolved, as arguments for and against them appeal to politically significant constituencies. National inquiries have documented the concerns and controversies surrounding clubs, and researchers, including myself, have analysed comparative data on the injuries sustained in communities with and without clubs; the effect of clubs on health and wellbeing in general; and their effect on people's cash expenditure, especially the diversion of funds away from food and other necessities (Brady & Palmer 1984, Langton et al. 1991, Martin 1993, d'Abbs et al. 1994, d'Abbs & Jones 1996, Gladman et al. 1997, Hoy et al. 1997, d'Abbs 1998, Shaw et al. 2015). Before concluding this discussion about efforts to 'teach' moderate drinking by means of rationing, canteens and clubs, it is important to mention some of the less obvious—more ontological—implications of this somewhat compromised project.

### Tethering

Irrespective of how many regulations and harm-reduction measures are in place, or how 'good' a club might be, one psychosocial outcome of clubs is that Aboriginal people living in communities with licensed clubs become 'tethered' to them. The concept of tethering derives from archaeology, where it is used to describe how the movements of ancient megafauna were tied to and bounded by the resource-rich riparian

corridors, or circuits, that provided their food and water (Smith 2013: 66). By putting a brake on the movements and interests of people, and confining them to the area that provides the desired resource, social clubs act as metaphorical tethering mechanisms.<sup>65</sup> In the past, the provision of food rations and water supplies by government to dispossessed Aboriginal groups performed this role (Rowse 1998, Brady 1999). Now, beer clubs fulfil one of their intended goals—keeping people at home and protecting them from the dangers of drunk driving and uncontrolled takeaway alcohol—through tethering. However, this creates another, somewhat less desirable, outcome.

Clubs bring about a narrowing of focus and contribute a sense of *confinement* to life in communities (cf. Purtill 2017: 230). Clubs (and drinking itself) become the centre of people's lives—the focus of attention to the exclusion of other activities and social and cultural engagements, so that people's thoughts seem to revolve exclusively around beer. Observing the relationship between the people of Mornington Island and their canteen, David McKnight (2002: 109) commented that in their 'continuous hunt for beer almost everything else becomes secondary'. Ten years later, anthropologist Cameo Dalley (2012: 151) wrote about the same community and how people structured their lives around the licensed outlet there:

The limited opening hours constrained the amount of time available to consume alcohol, which in turn contributed to the formation of a daily routine for some Aboriginal people structured around its operating times. During 2007, this routine began before the 4 pm opening time with those working for the local Mornington Shire Council.

To be ready by 4 pm, shire workers made sure their tasks were completed well before 'knock-off' at 3 pm. Finishing at 3 pm enabled drinkers to go home to prepare for their visit to the club, have a shower and get changed. Most customers made an effort to look clean and neat, sometimes borrowing clothes from kin (Dalley 2012: 151). This kind of planning ahead, taking into account of club opening times, affects people's contact with the land. People will abandon trips into the bush, fishing and hunting expeditions—even overnight stays to map sites on the land—to hurry back and be at the club when it opens. If the club, for whatever reason, is closed, this alters daily life dramatically. When, following the federal

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65 I am grateful to Dr Peter Murray for making this analogy and drawing it to my attention.

government's intervention in 2007, the Northern Territory clubs were instructed to close for two days each week, community members reported that they had a 'holiday from grog' on those days: some went fishing; others 'rested their brains' (as one person put it); and some men went shopping and prepared food for their wives—all apparently remarkable activities.<sup>66</sup> Such comments from community members imply that they experienced a kind of relief from the usual obsessive focus on the club with its mixture of pleasures and pains.

## Separatism

Most of the effects of tethering—curtailing and inhibiting people's interests and providing an obsessive preoccupation—are largely subliminal. Alongside these, the clubs are also effectively racially segregated, becoming Aboriginal domains. In achieving their goals of providing safer, controlled and sociable drinking environments, clubs are atypical in their social composition. No white Australian community workers drank at the 'canteens' when they were first introduced.<sup>67</sup> Despite becoming slightly more salubrious and less segregated in some places over time, Aboriginal clubs continue to be qualitatively different environments from other clubs or public hotels. In a public hotel or a town-based sport's club, an Aboriginal drinker might mingle with a range of other people and experience different drinking behaviours and settings for drinking and eating (and, perhaps, be subject to more stringent regulation).<sup>68</sup> This point was made in the 1960s by an objector to the licensing of a beer canteen at Yalata, who predicted that the canteen would have the effect of forcing Aboriginal people away from the hotels 'where they are equal with the white man and where they are learning to drink sensibly'.<sup>69</sup>

66 Brady fieldnotes, February 2013.

67 This has changed in recent years; non-Indigenous staff members and visitors now frequently patronise the clubs. In an intuitive acknowledgement of the notion of modelling 'good' drinking behaviour, some of these non-Indigenous patrons consciously 'set an example' by drinking moderately and not becoming intoxicated (Dalley 2012: 164, Brady fieldnotes, 2013).

68 This is not to deny that some hotel bars—such as 'animal bars'—frequented by Aboriginal people in rural Australia are nasty, dark, unsafe and subject to sometimes brutal security. Sansom (1980) refers to the 'thong bars' of Darwin: hotel bars where improper feet were those in thong sandals rather than shoes. As Sansom pointed out, Aboriginal 'fringe' dwellers drank thong-side, not shoe-side (180).

69 The objection came from a Methodist minister, Reverend Oates. State Library of South Australia, SRG 186 Series 174–82.

Papua New Guinea faced similar dilemmas in the 1980s when there was government pressure to expand the number of drinking clubs in the (often remote) villages. Well-informed policy researchers and alcohol policy experts cautioned against such a proliferation and recommended that:

It is far better to maintain a limited number of readily accessible public houses that can be inspected at least once a month, easily policed when problems occur, and kept physically separate from village areas where drinking may have a bad effect on women and children and disrupt other aspects of village life. (Marshall 1982: 456)

In Australia, the clubs in communities have always been atypical venues; they are neither proper ‘membership’ clubs like those of the towns (servicemen’s clubs, RSL clubs, bowls clubs and sport’s clubs—which often have extensive dining rooms), nor are they pubs. Unlike rural towns with clubs and pubs, for decades, the missions and communities had minimal or no policing, no safe place for the intoxicated and no hospitals (only primary care clinics) to deal with alcohol-related injuries. Aboriginal clubs are remotely located, in communities that are isolated from normal monitoring and checks and balances; in the early years, they were run by inexperienced staff. For all these reasons, they were cut off from changes taking place elsewhere: they were left behind. When the liquor laws in Australia were liberalised and deregulated in the 1960s, people believed that the drinking environment—the physical setting—was important. With the extension of licensed service hours, hotels began to change their layout and facilities; the long bars that had been built to accommodate the pressure of six o’clock swill drinkers gave way to smaller bars with adequate seating. ‘Vertical’ drinking<sup>70</sup> was known to produce excessive consumption, as was crowding: were these basic principles ever applied to the canteens and clubs in Aboriginal communities? The answer is no—or, more correctly, not until recently. Yet, even if clubs in Aboriginal communities now have good policies in place—even if they manage the drinking environment well—they remain strangely anomalous venues, more akin to the drinking facilities provided for remote mining camps, with their tethered and skewed clientele, than anything else.

Australia has only recently begun to implement ‘civilising’ and harm-reducing strategies in Indigenous community clubs. The process remains ad hoc and has met with strenuous resistance at times. It is regrettable that

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<sup>70</sup> Vertical drinking (standing up) arose from a lack of seating; it encouraged greater amounts of alcohol to be consumed and thus was targeted by pub reformers (Talbot 2015: 29).

clubs were allowed to operate for so many years without these strategies in place. Arguably, this strategic and policy error has set back progress on the daunting task of encouraging change in the culture of drinking. As the Northern Territory Licensing Commission (2009: 7) chair thoughtfully observed:

In the longer term there will need to be a focus on developing more cogent and appropriate policies in relation to safer, more orderly and supervised alcohol consumption for many of the [town] residents and visitors ... Greater efforts therefore need to be made to improve drinking practices of those whose consumption and exposure to the use of alcohol is 'at the margin' ... Better drinking habits will occur with regulation combined with harm minimisation education, with the key aim of reducing binge drinking and fostering socialised and more temperate consumption.

This text is taken from *Teaching 'Proper' Drinking?: Clubs and pubs in Indigenous Australia*, by Maggie Brady, published 2017 by ANU Press, The Australian National University, Canberra, Australia.